1: Titiev E-5 (1948) 1951 SG4 Araucanians SG4
Mapuche-Huilliche

WITCHCRAFT AND CURING PRACTICES

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BELIEF in witchcraft, ever widespread among the Araucanians, is still a pervasive element of their culture.[1] A witch or sorcerer, *kal·ku*, seldom operates individually, but is usually thought to be in league with others of his kind. Each *kal·ku* is supposed to train a youngster in the ways of sorcery, but the novice is sworn to secrecy and seldom practices witchery until he is old. Aged women are particularly apt to be suspected of witchcraft. By native definition, a *kal·ku* is one who deliberately harms or kills a person, generally upon request and payment by an enemy of the victim or else because of jealousy. A witch may or may not be related to the injured party, but he who employs a sorcerer must be prepared, if the victim succumbs, to have one of his own kinfolk die to even the score. In this sense, resort to witchcraft is regarded as a gamble.

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A suspected witch was formerly tried before a *loñko* and an assembly of his followers. If the testimony of at least two witnesses or accusers was accepted, the sorcerer was supposed to be slain on the day of the victim's funeral.[2] According to one of the accounts I was given, based on stories a thirty-eight-year-old informant had heard in youth, a guilty witch was tied and dragged by a man on horseback from her home to a spot where a blazing fire had been kindled. She was then beheaded, but to prevent any artful recovery, she was cut into pieces and these were thrown into the fire to be burnt to ashes. If a chief did not want to inflict such severe punishment, he could have the accused witch driven off his territory. Together with her close relatives she would thus be forced to wander from place to place until she found a *loñko* who was willing to accept her and her party. Such a chief might be a distant kinsman, an old friend,

[1] Practically every source dealing with Araucanian culture contains some material on witchcraft and curing. Particularly full accounts that supplement this field report are readily available in Latcham, 1909, pp. 350–53; 1924, pp. 770–822, *et passim;* and Métraux, 1939.

[2] Cf. Molina, 1808, p. 78; and Smith, 1855, p. 237.